1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

829 an parakeet. An, too, he say nuttn ebuh die way. Duh crops jis come back ebry yeah widout habin tuh be planted.

"Das all I membuh Hettie tellin bout Africa. Muh fathuh's fathuh come frum Africa too but wen muh fathuh Belali wuz a small young lad, muh granfathuh wehn tuh Dungeness on Cumberland Ilun tuh trade in slabes an nebuh wuz seen agen. It wuz muh fathuh Belali dat made rice cakes."

When asked about his father's mother, Ben continued, "Muh fathuh's mothuh lib at Altama. Huh name wuz Luna, but muh fathuh's fathuh wuz a unmarried man. Deah's many tings I do not membuh, it wuz sech a long time ago. I know dat wen deah wuz tuh be a buryin, dey alluz bury duh dead at night at duh plantation. Dey alluz come in frum duh tas befo dahk.

"In doze days deah wuz no way tuh git tuh Savannah cep •(505) by boat an wen Mr. Couper wannuh go, he use a boat bout fifty foot long an bout six foot wide. He take six strong oahsmen an dey would make it in ten aw twelve hours. I heahd tell ub a house buil by a man frum Africa, wid cawn stalks an mud an wid a straw filluh."

829 The flying story about old Alexander, the root maker, had
789 interested us and we asked if Ben Sullivan had heard of it.

"I ain heahd specially bout him but Ise heahd plenty Africans talk bout flyin. Deah's plenty ub em wut could fly.[88a, 89b] I sho heahd em talk bout great doins an Ise heahd ole Israel say duh hoe could wuk by itsef ef yuh know wut tuh say tuh it.[89] It bin a long time sence Ise tought bout tings lak dat, but ef uh studies bout em, dey comes back tuh me."

115 On the way back from Harrington to St. Simons village we stopped at Nora Peterson's * small cabin to talk with her. Nora, the daughter of Tom Floyd, an African who came to

* *Nora Peterson, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat until the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these descendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Methodist Church, where a number of these same people attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts.

(P XII-A)

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

• 505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were
(874) orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around
• 505 the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles
512 further. During the day, the only men usually on the island
(732) are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily
(734) sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for
(855) very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By
512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from
505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special
(574) occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the
207 islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to restrict variational data, the field work was conducted primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland. Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and economic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
197 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-
177

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard
533 anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the
505 ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions
461 such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers," [7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe [8] (Illustration 31) calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu
461 of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] *The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.*

[567] [8] *In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.*

A, [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533
539

O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

[46]
[505]

This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick" [9] in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

[9] *This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

48. KNOCK A MAN DOWN

Johnny Brown was captain of a tugboat called The Dandy, which towed to open water the sailing vessels coming to Doboy Sound for lumber. The stevedores agreed he was "the fines' cap'n of 'em all."

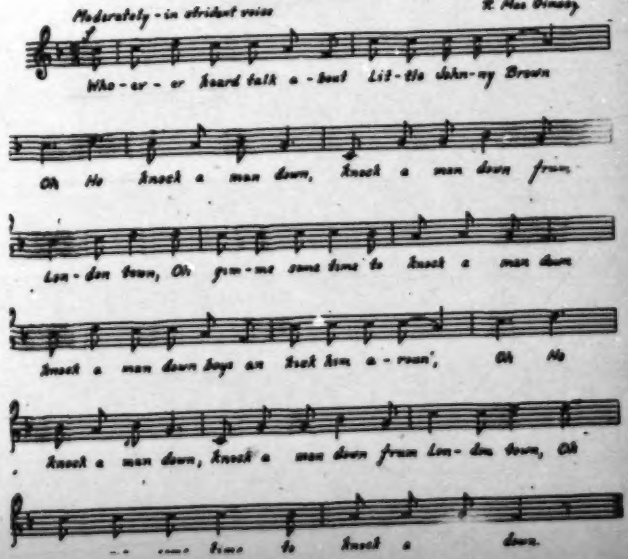
533
537
(505)

Whoever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Knock a man down bullies an' kick him aroun'
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Y'u ever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

R. Mac Gimsey


Moderately - in strident voice
Who - ev - er heard talk a - bout Lit - tle John - ny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down, knock a man down from
Lon - don town, Oh gim - me some time to knock a man down
knock a man down boys an kick him a - roun', Oh Ho
knock a man down, knock a man down from Lon - don town, Oh
- - some time to knock a down.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533
539
461
506

SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished in isolation and has survived with little change because of the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84] [505]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

175 181

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.